United Nations A/65/697

General Assembly

Distr.: General
28 January 2011

Original: English

Sixty-fifth session
Agenda item 33
Prevention of armed conflict

Letter dated 24 January 2011 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to request your kind assistance in circulating the present letter and its annexes: a letter addressed to you by the President of the Republic of Abkhazia, H.E. Sergey Bagapsh (annex I); and a letter addressed to you by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of South Ossetia, H.E. Murat Jioev, enclosing the statement of the President of the Republic of South Ossetia, H.E. Eduard Kokoity (annex II), as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 33.

An identical letter has been sent to the President of the Security Council (S/2011/33).

(*Signed*) Vitaly **Churkin**

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Annex I to the letter dated 24 January 2011 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

We highly appreciate the efforts undertaken by the United Nations, over the period 1992-2008, to resolve the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict. The Georgian-Abkhaz negotiations were held under the auspices of the United Nations and the Organization's involvement was key in securing the signing of the basic agreements between Georgia and Abkhazia on the non-use of force, in particular, the Moscow Agreement of 14 May 1994 and the Gagra Protocol of 25 May 1998.

Georgia's aggression, however, and its unilateral violation of the peace agreements, such as the incursion by Georgian troops into the Kodori Gorge in Abkhazia in August 2006, caused an escalation of tensions which then erupted into the war in South Ossetia in August 2008.

Over the entire negotiating process, Abkhazia has unswervingly insisted that, in the settlement of conflicts, there is no alternative to peaceful political dialogue. We also urge Georgia to refrain from the resumption of hostilities in the air, on the water and on land.

Georgia's aggressive policies, its large-scale military actions and its operations against Abkhazia, alongside Tbilisi's flouting of earlier agreements signed under the auspices of the United Nations and with the involvement of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), render us sceptical of the oral "affirmations of peace" by the Georgian leaders.

In this context, Abkhazia once again reiterates its commitment to the preservation of peace and stability in the region and reaffirms its position, enunciated in the Geneva discussions, that it aims to reach agreements not to use force and to launch a process of developing equal and good-neighbourly relations between Abkhazia and Georgia, based on the universally accepted rules of international discourse.

We also deem it important to stress that the Russian Federation, as Abkhazia's strategic ally, shall remain the guarantor of security and the non-resumption of hostilities between Georgia and Abkhazia.

Over the entire history of the conflict, Abkhazia has never instigated any aggression against its neighbour States and has no intention to do so in the future either. We officially declare that, in its relations with Georgia, the Republic of Abkhazia intends to adhere firmly to the universally recognized principle prohibiting the use or threat of force, as stipulated by international law.

At the same time, mindful of past experience, and also the persistent and aggressive de facto policy applied by Georgia against Abkhazia, we reserve the right of self-defence in the air, on the water and on land in the event of an armed attack or other acts of military aggression by Georgia.

In this connection, Abkhazia calls on the United Nations to promote the strengthening between the two sides of their reciprocal commitments not to use force and to refrain from any aggression, and to launch a process of building a new

system of security safeguards, designed to ensure the long-term stable and peaceful co-existence of two States: Abkhazia and Georgia.

(*Signed*) Sergey **Bagapsh**
President of the Republic of Abkhazia

Sukhum, 14 December 2010

Annex II to the letter dated 24 January 2011 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

I have the honour to transmit herewith a statement by the President of the Republic of South Ossetia (see enclosure).

We would be grateful if you could have the statement circulated among the States Members of the United Nations.

(*Signed*) Murat **Jioev**
Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of South Ossetia

Tskhinval, 6 December 2010

Enclosure

Republic of South Ossetia

Statement by the President of the Republic of South Ossetia, Eduard Kokoity

In his latest address to the European Parliament, Saakashvili said that he was ostensibly refraining from the use of force to restore the territorial integrity of his country and would not attack either the Russian "occupation forces", or their "proxies". Translated into plain language, this statement quite simply means that Saakashvili is promising not to use force against South Ossetia.

Statements couched in such terms are hard to take seriously. All the more so since it is high time that the world understood that Saakashvili's pronouncements are completely bogus. As a rule, they are followed by armed attacks on our country. That was the case in 2004 and the same happened again in August 2008. At that time, our own restraint in response to the sustained military provocations and our attempts to find a compromise solution through negotiation failed to ward off a barbaric attack by Georgia.

It is telling that the Georgian forces unleashed their hurricane bombardment of Tskhinval and their massive offensive a mere four hours after Saakashvili's solemn announcement of a ceasefire. Georgia's repeated attacks on our country — in 1920, 1989-1992 and 2004 — resulted in enormous loss of life. Only the prompt evacuation of the civilian population and intervention by Russia prevented tragedy on an even bloodier scale in 2008.

Over the time that has elapsed since the repulsed attack by Georgian forces on South Ossetia in 2008, Georgia has managed not only to restore, but even to augment, the strike capacity of its army. His aggression and crimes against humanity having gone unpunished, Saakashvili continues to plot his military revenge. As things stand today, the Russian forces stationed in the territory of our country on the basis of a bilateral intergovernmental agreement represent the principal guarantee of South Ossetia's security.

Accordingly, we continue to insist on written, legally binding undertakings not to use force, preferably accompanied by international assurances, something that has now been under discussion at the Geneva talks for more than two years. Only under those circumstances can we count on Georgia's adherence to the universally recognized practice of civilized relations. For its part, South Ossetia stands ready to give such undertakings.

At the same time, in response to the Georgian statement, I, as head of the Republic of South Ossetia, do officially declare: our State will not use force against Georgia, its people, its territory or its armed forces. There should be no doubt in anyone's mind about the peaceful nature of our aspirations. We want to build a free and independent South Ossetia, which would live in peace with its neighbours and in which Ossetians, Georgians, Russians and citizens of other nationalities would live peacefully side by side.

It is our earnest hope that one day our State too will be able to rely to the same extent on the assurances of our southern neighbours. In the meantime we reserve the

right, as necessary, of self-defence in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and, if our worst fears are confirmed, the aggressor will once again be repulsed as he deserves.

(*Signed*) Eduard **Kokoity**
President of the Republic of South Ossetia

Tskhinval, 6 December 2010